

8 December 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Report of Graphic Evaluation

1. Representatives of and consultants to the National Endowment for the Arts undertook an analysis of the graphic portfolio of this Agency on 8 and 9 October 1975. Their report was submitted to us on Friday, 5 December 1975. It is my opinion that all Agency personnel who participated in this exercise were impressed with both the conscientiousness and expertise of our surveyors and looked forward to the receipt of their report.

2. I should like to offer comments as I submit this report to you. Page 2 states, in part, that the panelists asked the undersigned to define "the mission of the Agency." The report misspeaks the request because, in fact, I was asked to comment on the perception we would choose to have people view us. The quotation of the answer I gave is about as accurate as any quotation which is fed back. There was, however, one additional sentence which has been left out. That sentence was approximately:

"We are a group of individuals who believe we deserve, and in fact demand, the respect of our Government and of our citizens."

3. My second comment is that the report raises an organizational issue of some sensitivity. Of all "sacred cows" in the Agency, none is probably more revered than the "Directorate-owned and controlled graphic arts facility." There has, as the report indicates, been an historical lack of coordination or even central guidance. For that reason, I propose to approach an internal review and study of this matter on a discreet basis. I am forwarding to the principal senior officers a copy of this report and asking for no written feedback at the present. In lieu of that, I will

suggest a discussion of the matter at a forthcoming CIA Management Committee Meeting and solicit reactions and viewpoints at that time. I do propose, however, that we carry on a continuing viable relationship with the National Endowment for the Arts.

STATINTL

[Redacted]  
John F. Blake  
Deputy Director  
for  
Administration

Att:

Distribution:

Original - DCI  
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Att: Report of Graphic Evaluation / Central Intelligence Agency  
by the Federal Design Improvement Program, National Endowment  
for the Arts, dtd December 1, 1975

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NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR  
THE ARTS

WASHINGTON  
D.C. 20506



A Federal agency advised by the  
National Council on the Arts

December 5, 1975

Honorable William E. Colby  
Director  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Mr. Colby:

I am pleased to transmit this report on the graphics of  
the Central Intelligence Agency -- based on a panel eval-  
uation of October 9 and 10, 1975.

We appreciate the many courtesies extended by your staff,  
and look forward to continued cooperation.

Sincerely,

  
Nancy Hanks  
Chairman

Report of  
Graphic Evaluation  
Central Intelligence Agency

Federal Design Improvement Program  
National Endowment for the Arts

December 1, 1975

Introduction

This report is the result of an analysis of the graphics portfolio of the Central Intelligence Agency. The evaluation took place on October 9 and 10, 1975, and consisted of analyzing nearly 70 items.

Appreciation is extended to the CIA for enthusiastic cooperation and support of the Federal Design Program, and to [REDACTED] and his working group for their diligence in collecting a well-rounded portfolio. The panel of experts who evaluated the portfolio:

James Dean  
Curator of Arts  
National Air and Space Museum

Grant Smith  
Manager, Graphic Design Center  
Westinghouse Corporation

Peter Smith  
General Manager  
MacMillan Education Corporation

RitaSue Siegel  
President  
Design Personnel Agency

Malcolm Grear  
Malcolm Grear Designers Inc. and  
Rhode Island School of Design

Jerome H. Perlmutter  
Coordinator of Federal Graphics  
National Endowment for the Arts

Paula Silver  
Assistant Coordinator of Federal Graphics  
National Endowment for the Arts

Nicholas Chaparos  
Coordinator, Design Information  
National Endowment for the Arts

Findings

One of the biggest and most encouraging advantages the Central Intelligence Agency has concerning better graphic design and communication is the agency's overall willingness to receive advice and constructive criticism.

The CIA portfolio display showed evidence of some talented designers/cartographers at work. In fact, the cartographic area was singled out for high praise in terms of outstanding work produced.

However, one of the strongest conclusions made by the panel of experts, who carefully evaluated the entire cross section of graphic items, was that clearly, total coordination of the agency's creative efforts was in order. Art direction has no central control. Fragmentation, confusion, lack of quality control, weak design and out-dated illustrations and formats were evident and considered communication liabilities.

When asked by panelists to define the mission of the agency, Mr. John Blake responded: "The CIA should be perceived as a group of well-educated, dedicated individuals coming from varied, academic disciplines. An agency reflecting the role of the U. S. today and in the future, working for the welfare and preservation of the United States Government."

Contrary to Mr. Blake's conception, the graphics generally reflect an agency born during and after World War II rather than conveying a contemporary mission.

Organization and Control

Of major concern to panelists was the lack of quality control regarding text, typography, layout and design. Evidently, publications are approached by several different designers with multiple but separate design responsibilities (i.e., charts, maps, texts, etc.) Without a joint concerted effort, fragmentation becomes the main weakness.

Some publications were interesting in style (atlases) and presentation but more publications did not have a unifying thread outside of consistent cover design. Panelists observed that a graphics system (which is at its initial stage of development) could bring together the many diverse elements. Their response was to implement stronger direction and quality control. Guidelines should be applied uniformly throughout all the graphic shops to achieve that objective.

Typography

Type styles are varied and mixed in practically all items reviewed. The problems become compounded with diverse material being handled within one publication. More strict attention should be given to developing grid systems -- those presented are mostly unworkable and not "in-depth enough" to solve the problem. Most typography shows a lack of concern for spatial qualities; it seems clear that the typography machine dictates what the person does. Little attention is given to leading and letter spacing, both are equally as poor. Margins are too wide for short paragraphs. Not enough spacing

between paragraph units. Typographic covers should reflect immediacy and importance, visually exciting; they generally do not. The ones exhibited are pedestrian and lack spatial concern.

Personnel

In every category, it was clear that improvements were possible if alternative approaches were used. Panelists observed that a lot was lost in the execution because designers leaned on out-dated techniques. Panelists pointed specifically to style, space, composition, color, layout as some of the more important factors. CIA designers should be exposed to a series of training programs. Special seminars led by a commercial designer would help keep CIA designers up to date and improve the quality and efficiency of their work.

Photographs and Illustrations

Photos presented seem adequate but uninspired. They convey their intent. Most illustrations (Literal especially) show a lack of drawing ability and are very dated in appearance as well as technique.

Priorities

Since one major goal of CIA's publications is passing on sensitive and readable information to the intelligence community and cabinet officials, a strong, fully coordinated and administered graphics program should be of the highest

priority. With the abundance of information to be digested, legibility must rank high especially for top administrative officials so that important intelligence data are not overlooked or delayed in reading. Information should be presented in a coordinated and unconfusing manner, unencumbered by duplication or fragmentation. It was most evident to panelists that high priority has been given to the hiring of top calibre personnel to develop accurate, well-designed, color-sensitive maps and charts. Equal priority needs to be given to other design areas responsible for conveying the Agency's message to the public and other audiences via posters, brochures, publications, etc.

Recommendations included a mandate from the agency director to establish a position of design coordinator responsible for central control and direction for the various different individual graphic shops. He would channel creative talents to better control and produce the design needs for each department. He would seriously consider drawing on the talents of an outside design consultant with experience in establishing visual communication systems.

The preparation of a new structure that would insure a more responsible level of graphic direction especially regarding typography, promotion of type and printing excellence, paper selection, and a graphics system which could be translated into a graphics standards manual. An overall monitoring of quality, along with more effective communication, could also prove to be both cost and time saving devices.

Graphic systems should be developed to create a consistent and coordinated appearance, one which will reflect the importance and immediacy of materials. This would help produce legible effective communications with little lead time. The recognition of each staff designer, illustrator, or photographer as a part of a team would contribute to a healthy environment which would produce better graphics.

Panelists also recommended that designers from different shops meet bi-weekly to share design information and explore new design techniques by either design experts visiting the CIA or the CIA staff going out to the design community.

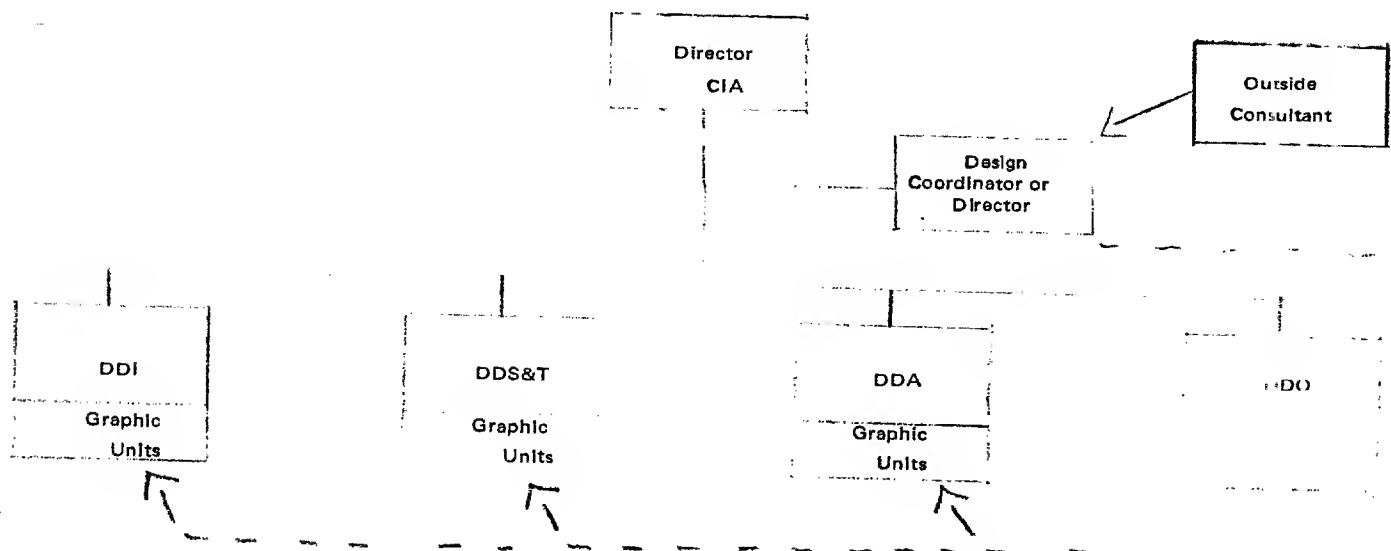
This might also initiate competition among staff designers for better and more refined results.

The following is a suggested chronology for the total program.

1. Receiving a mandate from the Agency's Director for the revision of structure, giving the independence and complete central control to the new position of Design Coordinator.
2. Consultation with the National Endowment for the Arts, for advice and assistance in selecting candidates for Design Coordinator.
3. Appointment of a Design Coordinator.
4. Engaging an outside consultant for professional advice and direction.
5. Development of a philosophy statement for the agency and its staff to make communication objectives clear and major goals identifiable.
6. Monitoring for quality and adherence.

Summing Up

In the final analysis to make the graphic program work, CIA must identify or recruit an experienced, knowledgeable design coordinator to develop and achieve quality graphics. An excellent source is a commercial designer who has gained experience establishing similar programs and would be willing to work for the CIA full-time. Essential to the design coordinator's success is the authority he receives and the structure of the design organization. Assuming a centralization of functions, the following is a model of a graphics structure that could well serve CIA needs:



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